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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 CPR-01 PER-01 EB-08 OMB-01
TRSE-00 /093 W
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P R 061620Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7097
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PPDC, CG, US, PFOR
SUBJECT: MOBUTU INAUGURATED FOR NEW SEVEN YEAR TERM

REF: STATE 288526

1. IN BRIEF, SIMPLE CEREMONY DECEMBER 5 BEFORE MPR PARTY CADRES AND FOREIGN GUESTS, MOBUTU TOOK THE OATH TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT OF MPR AND REPUBLIC OF ZAIRE FOR ANOTHER SEVEN-YEAR TERM. INAUGURATION FOLLOWED NATIONWIDE REFERENDUM DECEMBER 2 IN WHICH, ACCORDING TO GOZ, 98.16 PER CENT OF VOTERS CAST "YES" BALLOTS FOR MOBUTU'S CONTINUATION IN OFFICE.

2. ONLY CHIEF OF STATE ATTENDING INAUGURATION WAS CONGOLESE PRESIDENT OPANGO YHOMBI. MOST OTHER AFRICAN STATES WERE REPRESENTED BY SPECIAL EMISSARIES, INCLUDING NUMBER OF MINISTERS. OF THE FOUR NON-AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS WHOSE CHIEFS OF STATE WERE INVITED, BELGIANS SENT VICE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE PAUL VANDEN BOEYNANTS, WHILE FRENCH, US, AND GERMANS WERE REPRESENTED AT LOWER LEVEL.
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3. FOLLOWING POST-INAUGURATION LUNCH FOR FOREIGN DELEGATES ON BOARD PRESIDENTIAL RIVERBOAT, AMBASSADOR TALCOTT SEELYE, PRESIDENT CARTER'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, MET PRIVATELY WITH MOBUTU (TOBETHER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA DN AMBASSADOR CUTLER) TO CONVEY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (REFTEL). MOBUTU READ MESSAGE CAREFULLY AND CHARACTERIZED IT AS "WARM" AND "ENCOURAGING".

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4. DURING BRIEF CONVERSATION THAT FOLLOWED DELIVERY OF MESSAGE, AMBASSADOR SEELYE NOTED THAT WASHINGTON, INCLUDING THE CONGRESS, WAS FOLLOWING WITH CONSIDERABLE INTEREST THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IMPORTANT REFORMS -- POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY -- ANNOUNCED BY PRESIDENT MOBUTU IN HIS JULY 1 ADDRESS AND ELABORATED IN HIS PARTY CONGRESS SPEECH NOVEMBER 25. SEELYE SAID WE HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE PROGRESS MADE SO FAR, ALTHOUGH IT WAS CLEAR THAT MUCH REMAINED TO BE DONE, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID, WE HAVE NOTED WITH INTEREST THE UNFOLDING OF THE MOBUTU PLAN AND WILL CONTINUE TO REVIEW THIS WITH A VIEW AS TO HOW WE MIGHT WORK WITH THE GOZ AND ZAIRE'S OTHER FRIENDS TOWARD MAKING THE PLAN USEFUL AND SUCCESSFUL. SIMILALY, WE HAVE NOTED PROGRESS ON MILITARY REORGANIZATION AND WILL BE SEEKING THE BEST WAYS TO MAKE OUR FMS ASSISTANCE SUPPORTIVE OF THIS IMPORTANT AREA OF REFORM.

5. MOBUTU EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR CONTINUING HELP, WHICH HE SAID HE KNEW ZAIRE COULD COUNT ON AS IT HAD THROUGHOUT ITS TROUBLED HISTORY. BUT HE HOPED AMBASSADOR SEELYE WOULD MAKE CLEAR TO WASHINGTON THAT, CONSIDERING ZAIRE'S CURRENT DIFFICULTIES AND THE GOZ'S EFFORTS -- INCLUDING THE MOBUTU PLAN-- TO RESOLVE THEM, OUR ASSISTANCE WAS NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

6. COMMENT: MOBUTU SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED THAT A SPECIAL REPRE-
SENTATIVE HAD BEEN SENT FROM WASHINGTON AND HE MADE NO ALLUSIONS
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TO HIS ANXIETIES OR UNHAPPINESS WITH RESPECT TO US POLICIES TOWARD ZAIRE. HE SEEMED IN MUCH BETTER SPIRITS THAN HE HAS BEEN DURING THESE PAST FEW WEEKS OF MOURNING AND OTHER TROUBLESOME PREOCCUPATIONS. THE INAUGURATION -- LIKE OTHER CEREMONIES CONNECTED WITH THE PARTY CONGRESS -- WAS LOW KEY AND BUSINESSLIKE TO THE POINT OF BEING AUSTERE. THIS SIMPLICITY WAS IN STRIKING CONTRAST TO LAVISH CORONATION CEREMONIES TAKING PLACE CONCURRENTLY NEXT DOOR IN BANGUI -- A CONTRAST MOBUTU PROBABLY HOPED WOULD NOT BE LOST ON EITHER THE HARD-PRESSED ZAIRIAN PEOPLE OR FOREIGN OBSERVORS.
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